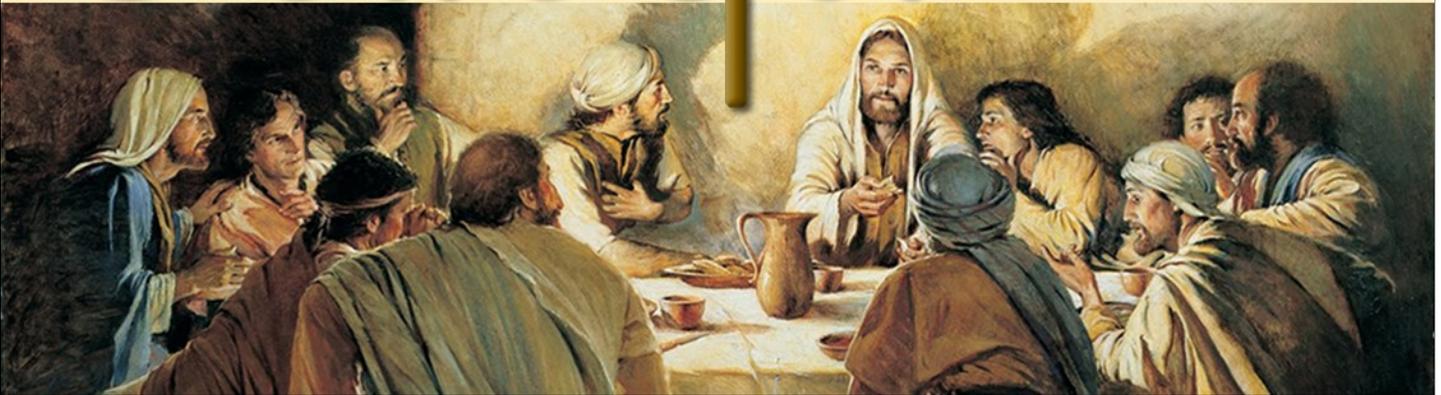


Colloquī

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A journal for restless minds

For Hate's Sake

Corroding the soul

Deacon's Diner

Food for a restless mind

Colloquī is a Deacon's Corner weekly journal. Its mission and purpose: to encourage serious discussion, to promote reasoned debate, and to provide serious content for those who hope to find their own pathway to God.

Each week Colloquī will contain articles on theology, philosophy, faith, religion, Catholicism, and much more.

Be forewarned! Articles may and often will contain fuel for controversy, but always with the express intent to seek the Truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help us God.

For Hate's Sake

Corroding the soul

There are moments, rare moments indeed, when some thing indelibly scribes the soul with an exquisite surprise of truth. The spirit inhales the sweet bouquet, ignoring the guardian prick for truth demands a thorny price few are wont to pay. What of souls that shun the truth like night avoids the day, coward spirits long since dead of life, souls so dark no light may hope to penetrate, where only hate resides?

It requires no genius to suggest that humans are of a peculiar nature, particularly at odds with every other living creature. Ignoring the obvious biological disparities, what distinguishes, what is uniquely human is the divinely inspired

union of spirit and matter, soul and body united in one nature.

"God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Man occupies a unique place in creation: (I) he is "in the image of God"; (II) in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; (III) he is created "male and female"; (IV) God established him in his friendship.

Of all visible creatures only man is "able to know and love his creator." He is "the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake," and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life.¹



Those who would so vehemently deny the transcendent nature of man, reducing *being* to mere unhappy circumstance, thus deny the mind its cognitive faculties to perceive, to judge, to abstract, to think, to learn, to

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abstract, to imagine, to recognize and appreciate what God has bestowed. They unconsciously deny consciousness, at best equating consciousness with sentience though clearly they are not the same.

Modern secularists hold fast the view that the mind is reducible to physical phenomena, neuronal activity produced within specific parts of the brain; precisely which part they can neither suggest nor confidently propose. Reason and simple logic disapprove for such philosophies must demand a cart move without a horse, propound effect without a cause, motion lacking motive, mathematics absent function and formulae, language supported by neither grammar nor syntax.

They profane with agnostic certainty: there can be no God, so also no transcendent soul. Such intransigence acknowledging the unknowable incomprehensible transcendence of *being* inevitably results in a vacuous vessel absent love. In love's absence unreasoned hate fills the void; and hatred corrodes the vessel in which it is stored.

There is an inverse relationship between love and hate, the more the love the less hate; conversely, the less the love the more the hate. Jesus once told a great crowd:

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26).

Here we find ourselves encumbered by our linguistic understanding and cultural bias for the word *hate*. Written in Greek, Luke uses the word *miseo* which translates to *hate* in English. This, of course, delights those critics who insist it shows that Jesus was a purveyor of hate, a hate-monger; such claims can quite easily be disproved. The core issue is one of translation compounded by the passage of time, social and cultural predilections.

**Hatred
corrodes the vessel
in which it is stored.**

— Chinese Proverb —

Ancient biblical languages such as Aramaic and Hebrew contain far fewer words than modern languages. Fewer words, less nuance thus results in harsh language, at least to modern sensitivities. For example, there is no word for "like" in Aramaic or biblical Hebrew. Biblical scholars and theologians for the most part agree that in the context of the passage from Luke's Gospel the word *miseo* would be better interpreted as "to love less than" rather than *hate*.

The Old Testament further supports this interpretation. For example: Genesis 29:30, Judges 14:16, and Deuteronomy 21:15-17. Some translations have softened the language by replacing *hate* with *dislike* or even *love less* although in each of these instances,

miseo is the word that the author used. We again find *miseo* used in this passage from Luke:

No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (Luke 16:13).

Such a common complaint "all are sinners" lacks conviction without consequence or measure. Love and hate, good and evil, right and wrong, justice and injustice, truth and falsity—each an inseparable pair, one positive, the other negative, one presence the other absence; all can be measured but only in proportion to the other. Love exists, hate does not; when love wanes or waxes low it leaves a void, that void is hate.

There is a common misperception, most often found among the secular elite, that faith and reason are incompatible; that belief in God and logical reasoning don't mix. Of course, those who think that this is so are wrong, but it is seldom efficacious in trying to convince them of their heresy. As Peter Kreeft, Professor of Philosophy at Boston College notes:

Logic can show that there is a God. If you look at the universe with common sense and an open mind, you'll find that it's full of God's fingerprints.

A good place to start is with an argument by Thomas Aquinas, the great 13th century philosopher and theologian. The argument starts with the not very startling observation that things move. But nothing

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moves for no reason. Something must cause that movement. And whatever caused that, must be caused by something else, and so on. But this causal chain cannot go backwards forever. It must have beginning. There must be an Unmoved Mover to begin all the motion in the universe: a first domino to start the whole chain moving, since mere matter never moves itself.

A modern objection to this argument is that some movements things in quantum mechanics—radioactive decay, for example—have no discernible cause, but hang on a second. Just because scientists don't see a cause, doesn't mean there isn't one. It just means science hasn't found it yet. Maybe some day they will. But then there will have to be a new cause to explain that one. And so on and so on. But science will never find the first cause. That's no knock on science. It simply means that a first cause lies outside the realm of science.

Another way to explain this argument is that everything that begins must have a cause. Nothing can come from nothing. So if there is no first cause, there can't be second causes. Or anything at all. In other words, if there's no creator, there can't be a universe.

But, what if the universe were infinitely old, you might ask? Well, all scientists today agree that the universe is not infinitely old, that it had a beginning in the Big Bang.

If the universe had a beginning, then it didn't have to exist. And things which don't have to exist, must have a cause.

There's confirmation of this argument from Big Bang Cosmology. We now know that all matter, that is, the whole universe, came into existence some 13.7 billion years ago and it's been expanding and cooling ever since. No scientist

doubts that anymore, even though before it was scientifically proved, atheists called it "creationism in disguise."

Now add to this premise, a very logical second premise—the principal of causality that nothing begins without an adequate cause. And you get the conclusion that since there was a Big Bang, there must be a Big Banger.

But is this Big Banger God?

Why couldn't it be just another universe? Because Einstein's General Theory of Relativity says that all time is relative to matter and since all matter began 13.7 billion years ago, so did all time. So there's no time before the Big Bang.

And even if there is time before the Big Bang, even if there is a multiverse, that is, many universes with many Big Bangs, as String Theory says is mathematically possible, that too must have a beginning. An absolute beginning is what most people mean by God.

Yet, some atheists find the existence of an infinite number of other universes more rational than the existence of a Creator. Never mind that there is no empirical evidence at all that any of these unknown universes exists, let alone a thousand or a gazillion.

The conclusion that God exists doesn't require faith. Atheism requires faith. It takes faith to believe in everything coming from nothing. It takes only reason to believe in everything coming from God.²

Since the dawning of the "Age of Reason" in the eighteenth century, the educated elite have insisted with absolute certainty that reason is all that is necessary to create heaven on earth, a utopian dream-puff filled with nothing but delightful goodness. There is no need for God or religion, reason is all we need. For nearly three centuries

the utopian prophets have insisted that evil doesn't make sense because it is irrational. All that is good and moral is rational and therefore reasonable. Unfortunately and tragically, this is at best wishful thinking and at its worst the reasoning of madness.

Reason may well argue for good but it may just as well argue for evil. Question: Is it right or wrong for a student to cheat on a test? Most would agree that it is wrong, but is it rational or irrational? That is a bird of a different feather, is it not? Reason may suggest the ends justify the means, that if the goal is admission to an elite university or being hired by a great company then cheating and getting away with it is the logical and rational thing to do.

Reason leads to good only when you want it to. Just as it leads to bad when you want it to. Reason is just a tool. It is no more intrinsically moral than a knife [or a gun]. A knife can be used to murder or to torture people. But in the hands of a surgeon, it can be used to save lives.

Reason can lead people to all kinds of conclusions. For example, asked if he would kill a disabled baby, a distinguished professor of philosophy at Princeton University responded, "Yes, if that was in the best interests of the baby and of the family as a whole." Can you offer a purely rational reason why the professor is wrong?

The only reason I can offer is a belief that all human beings are created in God's image and are therefore infinitely precious. But the preciousness of all human life is a belief, not an assertion of reason. The Greeks, the founders of Western reason, thought it quite reasonable

to leave sickly babies to die of exposure. The baby would just be a burden on the parents and the state. It was faith-based Jerusalem, the other parent of Western civilization, not reason-based Athens, that taught the world to keep sickly babies alive.

Travel anywhere around the globe and you will discover one irreducible, ineluctable fact, which is: virtually anything can be obtained in some form or fashion for a price. Almost everything you might possibly desire (good or bad) can be bought if you have something of sufficient value to pay for it. But for any transaction to occur there must first be a price established which requires a valuation to be made, which is for most people a dark art involving voodoo magic along with intricate and complex financial methods and processes. At its core, valuation is simply deciding what a thing is worth, its value, the price which others should be willing to pay.

Of course the essential question is who decides what a thing is worth? This question is, for the most part and in almost every case, unanswerable. In today's technological environment the price is generally established using some formulaic computer model which considers all the factors with callous indifference and spews out prices for thousands if not millions of things. But no matter how the valuation is accomplished it is based on actual purchasing behaviors, transactional history, and an understanding of human needs and desires.

So who decides what a human life

is worth? What price for your life, a member of your family, a friend, an enemy, a stranger, a fetus in the womb, someone with Alzheimer's, the young, the old, those with mental or physical disabilities, psychopaths, sociopaths, bigots, terrorists, murderers, geniuses, morons, givers, takers, lovers, haters, saints, sinners, rich, poor, good, or bad? Who decides whether you are essential or nonessential, important or unimportant, of great value or worthless refuse? Those who believe it not only right but their right to place value upon others ought to be reminded that Jesus said, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7).

History is replete with those who would play god, looking at all others as mere tools to be used, abused, and heartlessly discarded when no longer of any use. Millions upon millions of nameless and forgotten souls have perished but for the whim and dictate of those who believe only in their power to rid themselves of those who were perceived to be of no consequence or value. Under Stalin it has been estimated that more than 20 million people were killed while more than 12 million people were killed by the Nazis under Hitler. While these numbers are staggering and hard to fathom in their abhorrent numbers, they are far fewer than the 50 million unborn infants murdered in the U.S. alone since abortion was legalized in 1973.

The horrifying reality is that when it is man who decides another man's value, that value too soon dissipates, reduced to no value when perceived as a threat, a nuisance, or an inconvenience. Those

whose argument is that it is their right to choose, that it is theirs to decide over the life or death of another have neither such a right nor any legitimate claim to such power. In the matter of human lives there is not one scintilla of difference between those who would kill millions and those who would kill one.

The Greek word *'hamartia'*, means *'missing the mark'*, and is often used in Sacred Scripture when referring to *'sin'*. We have been taught, from an early age, that we are all sinners; that we were born with the stain of original sin, and that baptism removed that stain from our souls and made us innocent in the eyes of God.

Our first human parents committed that first sin, a sin of pride and selfishness, because of a

deep-rooted tendency to miss the mark, to be self-centered, to see all of life focused on "me, myself, and I."³

Unfortunately, that tendency toward self-centeredness seems to be alive and well today, or as someone once called it, "the new trinity of Me, Myself, and I rather than Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

The book of Ecclesiastes recognizes and declares explicitly that self-adoration is at the core of our weakness, our concupiscence which leads us to place ourselves before God.

Vanity of vanities, says Qoheleth, vanity of vanities! All things are vanity! For what profit comes to

man from all the toil and anxiety of heart with which he has labored under the sun? All his days sorrow and grief are his occupation; even at night his mind is not at rest. This also is vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:22-23).

God is Love and He created us out of love and all that He has created is good.

God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living. For God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him. But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who are in his possession experience it (Wisdom 1:13, 2:23-24).

Man, through pride and selfishness, brought death and evil into the world. God gave us free will, the ability to choose between right and wrong. That means that every sin is personal, a personal choice to do wrong, to choose moral evil rather than virtuous good, to “miss the mark.”

Saint Augustine tells us:

God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living. For God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him. But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who are in his possession experience it.⁴

Sin doesn't hurt God but God hates sin.

The reason God hates sin is that it damages and even destroys the thing He loves the most: his children. Aquinas wrote, “For we do not offend God except by doing

something contrary to our own good” (Summa Contra Gentiles III, 122.2).⁵

Irish playwright Oscar Wilde once said, “Some people cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go.” We all know those whose presence warm our hearts and fill the room with joy and laughter just as we are aware of others for whom we cringe at the very thought. To paraphrase Wilde: “Some people we love without reservation; others, with great reservation.”

The truth is that loving others can often be a far more difficult task than anything else we might attempt to do in this life. Let's face it, it is extremely difficult to love some people, especially those whose virulent hatred and animosity toward others lends no opening through which one can inject even an ounce of love.

To be a child of God we must first love as a child. A child loves without judgment, without prejudice, without condition, without reservation for a child knows nothing of such things. A child sees another as a kindred soul to love. A child has yet to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and bad, has yet to know the difference. If you love as a child, you will surely be called a child of God.

1. Catechism of the Catholic Church, § 355—356.
2. Peter Kreeft, Professor of Philosophy at Boston College, “God vs. Atheism: Which is more rational?”, Prager University, PragerU.com.
3. Richard C. Sparks, *Contemporary Christian Morality*.
4. CCC § 1846.
5. Father Paul Check, Catholic Answers Magazine.

Deacon's Diner

Food for a restless mind

For those restless minds that hunger and thirst for more. Each week this space will offer a menu of interesting and provocative titles, written by Catholic authors, in addition to those referenced in the articles, for you to feed your restless mind.

BOOKS

Thoughtful Theism

Fr. Andrew Younan

Emmaus Road Publishing
2017, 200 pages.

To Change the Church

Ross Gregory Douthat

Simon & Schuster
2018, 256 pages.

Strangers in a Strange Land

Charles J. Chaput

Henry Holt and Co.
February 21, 2017, 288 pages.

PERIODICALS

First Things

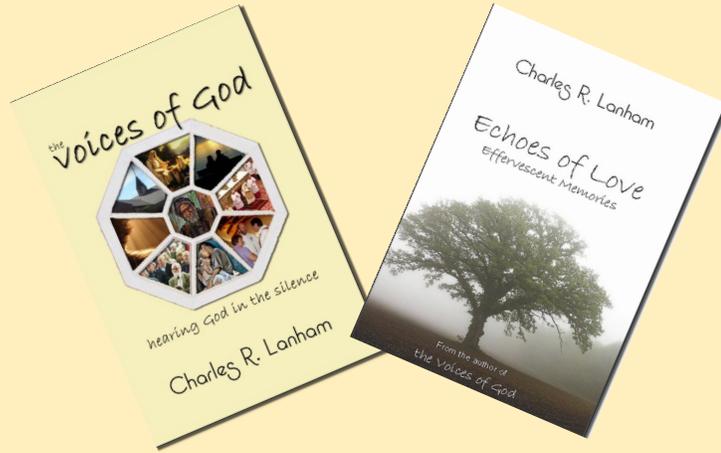
Institute on Religion and Public Life
Editor: R. R. Reno
Ten Issues per year.
www.firstthings.com

Touchstone

A Journal of Mere Christianity
Editor: James M. Kushiner
Bi-Monthly.
www.touchstonemag.com

Catholic Answers Magazine

Share the Faith, Defend the Faith
Editor: Tim Ryland
Bi-Monthly.
www.catholic.com



Books are available on **Amazon.com** or from the author's web site at:

deaconscorner.org

Deacon Chuck Lanham is an author, columnist, speaker, and a servant of God.

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